

Urban Education Reform First Year Successes

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Welcome back to what promises to be an exciting school year! Based on the success of last year's early childhood programs, we anticipate continued improvements in urban education within the Abbott districts. This issue of our newsletter highlights joint efforts of the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Human Services (DHS) that will help to ensure the effectiveness of the early childhood urban education reform initiative. The following summarizes some of the year's accomplishments.

Increased Enrollment

During the 1999-2000 school year, there was an increase of 5,888 children in Abbott district preschool enrollment. On September 9, 1999, 23,444 children were enrolled and on May 1, 2000, 29,332 children were enrolled in preschool programs at both community-based and in-district sites.

Recruitment Efforts

Districts have recruited extensively for September 2000 enrollment, resulting in a pre-registration of 10,995 children as of May 1, 2000. Strategies included TV, radio and newspaper announcements, fliers, brochures, posters, banners and word-of-mouth to reach as many parents as possible. Many districts hosted registration fairs and other community events. Preschool information was printed on shopping bags, restaurant placemats and bus placards. While recruitment efforts have been very successful and far-reaching, DHS has contracted with the Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey to recruit among hard-to-reach populations.

Meeting the Supreme Court Directive

In accordance with the Supreme Court Abbott VI decision, we reduced maximum class size from 20 children with a teacher and two aides to 15



children with a teacher and an aide. Additionally, the timeline for teacher certification requirements in community programs was revised by moving up the deadline so that all existing teachers will be appropriately certified by the year 2004.

New Certification Requirement

A Preschool through Grade 3 (P-3) endorsement on the elementary instructional certificate was established and will be required of all teachers in both in-district programs and community-based sites. Effective September 1, 1999, centers contracting with Abbott districts may hire only teachers with at least a bachelor's degree. These teachers are required to obtain the P-3 endorsement by September 2001. Teachers employed in these centers prior to September 1, 1999 must obtain bachelor's degrees and the P-3 endorsement by September 2004. Additional information appears in another article in this issue of *AECE News*.

Curriculum

The publication and dissemination by DOE of the *Early Childhood Education Program Expectations: Standards of Quality* provided a benchmark for use in providing quality programs with developmentally appropriate opportunities. This will ensure that early childhood education programs provide experiences that will prepare all children to achieve New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards as they enter school.

Evaluation

DOE and DHS are funding a five-year independent, external evaluation of the implementation and outcome of the Abbott early childhood education initiative. Westat, a nationally recognized research firm that has conducted many large-scale assessments of preschool education programs, is conducting New Jersey's evaluation. The evaluation will provide ongoing information about the children served in the Abbott districts and about the program's overall effectiveness. Look for more information on the evaluation in another article in this issue of *AECE News*.

Both Departments have committed to continuing efforts to ensure a high-quality early childhood education program throughout the state. We look forward to the upcoming year, and to working closely with the early childhood education community as we build on last year's successful endeavors.



Back To School



It's September. We've bought the new clothes, loaded up the backpacks, and sent the kiddies off to school. What an adventure!

But this year, it isn't just our kids we are sending off to school. Teachers are about to embark on their own adventure by going to college to earn the new P-3 teaching endorsement.

Six colleges and universities will offer certification courses this fall. They include Kean University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Rowan University, The College of New Jersey, and William Paterson University. If none of these is convenient, Kean University offers the P-3 program entirely online for those who have already earned a bachelor's degree. All that is needed is a computer and an Internet browser.

Teachers who have been employed in child care centers prior to September 1999 and have a bachelor's degree are required to obtain the P-3 endorsement by the year 2004. Teachers without a bachelor's degree must also meet the 2004 deadline. Teachers with a bachelor's degree and who were hired for September 2000 are required to obtain the P-3 endorsement by September 2001.

Several sources of support are available to teachers as they begin their professional development journey. Over the next few months, teachers without degrees will be contacted by their community colleges regarding the associate-degree programs offered. College representatives will guide teachers through their associate-degree programs and will facilitate their transfers to four-year colleges.

An advisor from the New Jersey Professional Development Center should have already contacted teachers with associate's degrees. These advisors have a wealth of information to make enrollment in a four-year college much easier. If you have an associate's degree and have not been contacted by an advisor, call the Professional Development Center at 908-527-3186 and ask that an advisor be assigned to you.

Kean University

Contact: Dr. Cynthia Garnett 908-527-2095
Dr. Michael Knight 908-527-2661
Dr. Michael Searson 908-527-2094 (online course)

Montclair State University

Contact: Dr. Joanne Cote-Bonanno 973-655-7101

New Jersey City University

Contact: Ms. Jody Eberly 201-200-3421 or 201-200-2000
(menu choice 4, extension 4177)

Rowan University

Contact: Dr. Carl Calliari 856-256-4739/8
Dr. Lorraine Wylie 856-256-4500, extension 3827

The College of New Jersey

Contact: Mr. Frank Cooper 609-771-2300

William Paterson University

Contact: Dr. Maureen Gillette 973-720-3086

Scholarships are available to teachers employed in community-based programs under contract to provide services to Abbott-eligible children. Scholarships will pay for tuition and fees related to obtaining the P-3 endorsement. Information and applications for scholarships can be obtained at the NJ Professional Development Center web site [www/njpdpc.org](http://www.njpdpc.org), or by calling the NJPDC scholarship line at 908-558-3920.

Licensure Update: *Preschool through Grade 3 Endorsement*

The State Board of Education adopted amendments to N.J.A.C. 6:11 on March 1, 2000. This created a new endorsement, Preschool through Grade 3 (P-3), on the Elementary instructional certificate.

Teachers who were newly hired as of September 1, 1999 for child care centers contracting with Abbott school districts are required to hold a bachelor's degree and to obtain the P-3 endorsement by September 2001. Teachers employed in centers prior to September 1, 1999 must obtain a bachelor's degree and the P-3 endorsement by September 2004.

There are exceptions to this new requirement for certificate holders with "grandfather" rights:

- ✎ **Teachers of nursery school** - (N-K) endorsement holders may teach preschool through kindergarten.
- ✎ **Elementary school teachers** - Elementary endorse-

ment holders may teach preschool if they also have two years of documented teaching experience in a preschool setting.

- ✎ **Secondary school teachers** - (N-12) endorsement holders may teach only the subject for which they are certified.
- ✎ **Other endorsements** - Those holding valid kindergarten through specified grade level certificates may teach kindergarten through the grade level specified on the endorsement. They may not teach preschool.

The *Back to School* article above contains information on colleges offering certification courses this fall. For more information on the P-3 endorsement, contact Ida Graham, Director of the DOE Office of Licensing and Credentials, at 609-292-2045.

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When will the new Preschool through Grade Three (P-3) endorsement be available?

The P-3 endorsement will be available in September 2001.

2. Where can I obtain information about the P-3 endorsement?

Questions should be addressed to Ida Graham, Director of the Department of Education's Office of Licensing & Credentials, at 609-292-2045.

3. Do teachers who work in school district preschool programs need to meet the new P-3 requirements?

Yes, any Abbott district that employs a new teacher must require the new teacher, by September 1, 2001, to hold the new P-3 endorsement. Current teachers who have elementary certification and two years of early childhood experience will be grandfathered and will not need to obtain the P-3 endorsement.

4. Are scholarships available for Abbott-contracted center staff who are working toward a bachelor's degree and/or P-3 endorsement?

Yes, there are scholarships available. For information, please call the NJ Professional Development Center at Kean University at 908-558-3920 or see their web site at www.njpdcc.org.

5. Is there assistance available for contracted centers to hire substitute teachers to cover classes while staff is in training?

Yes, the NJ Professional Development Center at Kean University also administers the Department of Human Services' substitute teacher initiative. For information, please call 908-527-3186.

6. How many family workers must a contracted center employ?

Child care centers must employ one family worker for every 40 children.

7. What are the qualifications for a family worker?

- ✎ Experience working with families, particularly those with young children; and their families
- ✎ Knowledge of local social service agencies and community resources;
- ✎ Experience working in the community in which the center is located;
- ✎ Associate's degree preferred, but

strong prior experience (i.e., as a preschool teacher, teacher aide or community worker) acceptable.

8. What backgrounds do family workers usually have?

Family workers may have been working with the preschool population as caregivers or for a community-based organization providing outreach to families. They are familiar with the community and are comfortable establishing a relationship with parents, teachers, children and other community members. They are eager to learn about resources and to assist families in accessing these resources.

9. What are the responsibilities of a family worker?

- ✎ Meet with every family and engage them in an assessment process that will help identify the family's needs;
- ✎ Work with center staff and families in engaging and involving parents in their children's preschool experience;
- ✎ Be involved with the family to assure that resources are appropriate and that their needs are being met;
- ✎ Work closely with child care staff and, when appropriate, work with school district staff to transition a child to kindergarten;
- ✎ Be available to assist families with resolving issues that impact the child.

10. What are some of the things that family workers do?

Some family workers have surveyed and interviewed families to identify their needs. Workers have designed programs and services to respond to these needs. Examples include workshops on topics such as Safe Kids, NJ KidCare, and nutrition. They have formed support groups for grandparents who are raising children and for parents who want to improve parenting skills. Family workers are often present when children are picked up from centers, enabling them to build rapport with parents. They may schedule interviews, visit homes or have informal conversations. As families become comfortable with the workers, they are more likely to ask for help with issues such as domestic violence and substance abuse.

11. Can a part-time family worker also hold a classroom position?

No. A family worker cannot be regularly responsible for meeting or maintaining the staff/child ratios in the center.

12. Can a person who is serving as a full-time director combine that role with the role of the family worker?

No. There would be no way to separate the hours and responsibilities of the positions.

13. Can a family worker be shared among several centers?

Yes, as long as the required ratio of one family worker for each 40 children is maintained.

14. Can a family worker be someone who is "on call" when needed?

No. A family worker must be fully dedicated to that function and serve no other role.

15. What are the family worker hiring options for centers with fewer than 40 children?

A small center can pay a part-time person based on the number of children that they serve or share a full-time employee with another center.

16. Are family workers eligible for the Department of Human Services' scholarship program administered by the NJ Professional Development Center at Kean University?

No. Since family workers are not required to have or obtain a specific credential, they are not eligible for scholarship dollars.

17. What exactly is a full-day, full-year program?

A full-day program is a 10-hour day: six hours of educational program and four hours of developmentally appropriate wraparound child care. The full-year program operates 12 months of the year: 10 months of educational program with wraparound child care and two months of developmentally appropriate summer child care.

FAQs will be a recurring column in the AECE News. The Departments of Education and Human Services welcome questions from those participating the Abbott preschool program. FAQs will be printed periodically as a service to the Abbott community.



Statewide Evaluation Update: Abbott Preschool Programs

New Jersey continues in its commitment to strengthen early childhood programs in Abbott districts. It has awarded a five-year, \$6.2 million dollar contract to Westat of Rockville, Maryland to conduct an independent, external evaluation of Abbott district early childhood programs throughout the state - both in contracted child care centers and in district-run programs. Westat is a nationally recognized research firm that conducts large-scale studies assessing preschool education programming.

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide information for continuous quality improvement and to share best educational practices within the Abbott early childhood education community. It will provide information about the program, the children served in the Abbott districts, and statewide implementation strategies.

Westat has developed a comprehensive evaluation plan that includes the following:

- discussions with state and local

education officials;

- observational visits to early education sites throughout the state;
- curriculum review;
- interviews with other partners in Abbott early childhood education.

The evaluation will be coordinated and supervised by a project manager who will establish an external advisory group comprised of Abbott district administrators and representatives from early childhood education programs.

There are two main components of the Abbott evaluation: implementation analysis and longitudinal analysis. The implementation analysis will identify key issues in the implementation of programs. Examples include classroom quality, program operation in various locations, the relationship to Whole School Reform models, and the amount of resources and funding at the state level. The longitudinal analysis will evaluate children's school readiness as well as cognitive, social and physical development by following the progress of a selected group of three- and four-year-old children living

in Abbott districts.

A sample of students will be evaluated at the beginning of the first year (2000-2001).

Follow-up evaluations of these children will be conducted at subsequent intervals.

The Abbott district superintendents, early childhood supervisors and contracted centers are expected to play an important role in the evaluation process. They will provide input into the study design and the data-collection process and will work with the project manager in the collection of data.

The overall evaluation is a multifaceted process. We expect that the joint efforts of DOE, DHS, Westat, Abbott district administrators and the early childhood community will provide valuable information for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Whole School Reform early childhood education initiative.



Photos by Sandy Sheard

NEW JERSEY
Many Faces, One Family
Charlotte Whitman, Governor



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